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# Food & Nutrition

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## GETTING NEW SKILLS FOR THE 1980's



In the coming year, we will be publishing a number of articles on technical assistance for school food service people — articles with energy-saving tips, information on how to use USDA commodity foods, and services available from the Food and Nutrition Information Center.

In this issue, we focus on food service training, particularly what state and local professionals are doing to help food service people upgrade their skills and improve their programs.

**They've Come A Long Way — Food Service Training and Food Service People** Page 2

**Training Child Care Center Staffs** Page 6

**Making the Most of School Lunch Dollars** Page 9

**Putting Nutrition and Business Together** Page 11

COOKING FOR

OR  
**1-2**

Also in this issue is a set of low-cost, easy-to-prepare recipes for small families or people who live alone. There are six pages of recipes in all, and they can be xeroxed for use by food stamp workers, nutritionists, social service aides and others who work with low-income families. **Page 13**



# They've Come A Long Way— Food Service Training and Food Service People

Training for school food service workers has come a long way, in just the past decade.

Those who have been with school food service during that time, or longer, have seen training evolve from large state-level workshops once a year to small groups at the county or school district level.

They've seen performance standards established for the various jobs in school food service, and training designed to help people meet those standards.

They've also seen modern technology open up the training field and expand opportunities for instruction at the local level. Techniques such as video-taping presentations have made it easier to train small groups. In many areas, school food service people can check out cassettes and transparencies and study on their own.

## **Certification programs help**

States have developed various systems of certification to recognize levels of training in school food service. In New Mexico, for example, it takes 75 certification points to become certified as a cafeteria manager. To be certified as a specialist, such as a cook or a baker, workers must have 50 points. To renew their certification, New Mexico school food service people must earn 40 points every 3 years.

In Georgia, the state board of education requires that for a school to be accredited, each cafeteria manager must take 30 hours of continuing education in a year. Each school food service assistant must take 12 hours in a year.

About 8 years ago, the American School Food Service Association started its certification program, which is now being used by many schools around the country.

Thirty-three states participate in the certification program developed by ASFSA. School food service workers are trained in three levels—director, manager, and assistant—in 11 types of competencies. The listing of job functions and competencies for school nutrition personnel was published in 1978. The training covers such areas as safety, sanitation, cooking and baking skills, and knowledge of state and federal regulations.

In 1979, the certification program was moved to the School Food Program Foundation, an organization parented by ASFSA, and it became open to non-members as well as association members. Currently, 41 percent of the 20,000 people certified are ASFSA members.

The foundation works closely with industry in developing the training programs. For example, the wheat flour industry developed a package of training materials on baking, and pork producers and the turkey federation are working with the foundation on other materials.

Also, the foundation distributes a training program developed by the Oregon School Food Service Division. It is a complete program packaged in super-8 film cartridges with continuous loop-type design. Manuals and pre- and post-tests accompany each film.

## **Training pays off**

"The ASFSA certification program has contributed a great deal to raising the level of professionalism of school food service," says former ASFSA president Josephine Martin, who is now director of the local systems support division of the Georgia Department of Education. "The program provides some recognition, and it provides incentives for participating in training."

Raising the standards and requirements for school food service workers has resulted in more opportunities for training and appropriate salary changes in many school districts.

"Because the certification is effective for a 3-year period, food service personnel have to have programs with scheduled opportunities for on-the-job or other training," Martin explains.

Martin feels the training has made a difference. "It has improved the quality of food, the variety of foods offered, and it has also improved the manager's ability to plan and prepare meals at a cost children can afford to pay. In Georgia, approximately 54 percent of the children buy their lunches. Consequently, it is very important to us that the sale price be kept as low as possible."

## **Challenges and opportunities**

Martin's professional service includes over 20 years in the Georgia school food and nutrition field. She has also been involved much of the time with other professionals in solving school nutrition problems of a national scope. She served 2 years in USDA's regional office in Atlanta and believes better communication would result with more federal-state exchange of experience. More changes are coming, she believes, which will challenge everyone in the school food service field.

Martin remarks: "We really believe in training, and training never ends. Was it Mark Twain who said: 'Training is everything. Even the cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.'? With the changing dynamics of this program, we have to continue to be trained because the way we did it last year is not good enough for this year."

"The profession is growing up, and it has grown up a tremendous amount in the decade of the '70s. I think with some of the challenges and opportunities we will have in the '80s, we will see the profession of school nutrition refined to a much greater extent than we have seen it before."

There are many examples of how state and local people are making training interesting and accessible. Here are a few examples from around the country:



# Highlights from around the country:



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## Arizona builds a pyramid for food service

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Arizona has directed a food service training program for almost the entire life of the National School Lunch Program. The training program has been built into the design of a pyramid to accommodate all levels of training needs.

"Seven or eight years ago, we had a series of five basic classes that were designed for budding managers," said Joan Hurley, deputy food service director of the state agency. "We had other people who never intended to be managers but still wanted schooling, so we designed what we call a pyramid."

"We started with the five basic classes: nutrition, menu planning, human relations, quantity food production, and safety and sanitation. Each was worth 20 hours. Any cafeteria employee could go either in the morning or the afternoon for a week, 4 hours each day."

The pyramid design rests on the basic classes and proceeds up the training ladder in a logical progression. At the second level is: teaching nutrition, then menu evaluation and the cycle menu, employee training, and engineered and convenience foods. It then goes on to special nutrition needs and short cuts for quality.

Hurley explained: "As our people go through this pyramid, it really becomes a challenge for them. We also designed a special problems class that serves as an update course. This year, we're going to do a class on current issues from the employee's viewpoint, like what child nutrition program cuts mean."

"We have developed a curriculum module for each of these training sections. We field tested some of them last year and the remainder this year. We hope to have them all finalized in the fall."

Participants in the Arizona program get 3- by 5-inch certificates for the completion of each class. Then, at each new level, they get 8½- by 11-inch certificates color-coded to that different level. ASFSA certification points are also given for each class, and some schools have a salary increase on the teachers' continuing education scale for classified employees. "That has helped," Hurley added.

For more information, write:  
Food and Nutrition Unit  
Department of Education  
1535 W. Jefferson  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

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## South Carolina works on skills with Project SIFT

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Project SIFT is a training program now in its second year in South Carolina. Its name—Skills, Improvement in Food Service Techniques—is consistent with its focus. As Nancy Rabert, project liaison for the state department of education explained, "We're interested in skills training rather than theory."

The department of education contracted with Midland Technical College at Columbia to construct the training program for school food service workers. The training involves two separate 4-day workshops, one designed for the specific training needs of managers, another for the training needs of operators.

The managers work mainly in classroom settings, while the operators have food labs three mornings. The training is offered during the summer at four sites in different parts

of the state.

Jan Temple, director of Project SIFT for Midlands Technical College, developed the training package and continues to work closely with the state department of education. She believes an advantage of the project is an active advisory council that includes lay people as well as representatives of the food industry and school administrators.

This past summer, project coordinators tried some new approaches, based on what they learned during the first year. "For example," said Temple, "we set up visual media testing. Participants had a test to mark on and an automated visual slide. We had them use all their senses—there were seeing and hearing components as well as the written one. We put up pictures that helped them recall quickly. We involved some testing people with this."

Project managers and instructors emphasize the importance of the job being done by the participants in the training program. A primary goal is to create a positive self-image for participants and to advance the standards of school food service.

"We really hit them with the important role they play in the school," Temple said. "We tell them what a good job they're doing, and we talk to them about professionalism. It's paying off."

Local supervisors have reported that their employees are noticeably more interested in their jobs and they're using new techniques learned during training.

For more information, write:  
Director of School Food Services  
State Department of Education  
305 Rutledge Building  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

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## A New Mexico district conducts own training

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Food service workers in Clovis, New Mexico, don't have to go far to get further training in their profession. Training goes on throughout the year right in their own school system.

To make it possible for workers to complete the courses they need for recertification, the Clovis school



# In brief...

system has developed a comprehensive training program. Without the program, according to food service director Jane Hammond, many people would find it difficult to get the 40 points they need to be recertified every 3 years.

"If a person can attend the state convention every year," she said, "they can get the points they need to recertify. But if they have children and responsibilities at home and can't go, they would have no way of getting recertified if we didn't do something at the local level."

Hammond was part of the five-member committee that worked for a year to draw up a certification program for the state school food service association. At Clovis, salary increases are tied to completion of the courses for recertification.

"About a third of our people go to the state convention," Hammond added, "but many take part in our training program, which continues throughout the year. We have training at least once a month, and each session represents 2 points."

In conjunction with the local dietetics association, the district has held two workshops with nationally known people as instructors. Participants got 15 points for the 2 days. Food service workers from other school districts in the state were invited to attend.

Other workshop leaders have included the dietitian from the local hospital, who held a class on nutrition, exercise and health, and a food service specialist from Arizona, who gave instruction on bread baking.

According to Hammond, the training is helpful to the district as well as to individual food service workers. "We have little turnover among our people, and we like it that way. If you have to start school with new people every year, it's tough. We have a lot of people who have worked with us for 25 years.

"It's a big help to start the school year with people who know the rules of sanitation and how to prepare food."

For more information, write:  
Jane Hammond,  
Food Service Director  
Clovis Public Schools  
Eighth and Pile Streets  
Clovis, New Mexico 88101

**Colorado.** During the summer, the state staff conducts 1-week training sessions at the University of North Colorado. Each year a different school district is responsible for planning the menus for the training course.

**Iowa.** Iowa offers three 1-week summer courses in cooperation with Iowa State University. Independently, the state university offers a fourth course, and community colleges cooperate in offering a 1-week basic course during the year for new food service workers.

**Illinois.** Illinois has contracted with Purdue University to develop a food service training manual, which is expected to be completed next year.

**New Jersey.** The state has developed a curriculum that is used at adult evening schools. Courses are targeted for the general worker, cook, baker and lunchroom aide.

**Ohio.** A manager preference questionnaire formed the basis for a series of 26 workshop sessions. The state usually offers eight 2-day sessions at a time.

**West Virginia.** The state is adding some new courses to its training school for food service managers and workers. The courses include: food ordering, standardized recipes, and food production. Courses are being developed to take into outlying counties.

**Georgia.** Training-in-Depth (TID) is the major vehicle within the state to train the local manager. TID is a joint effort between the State Department of Education and the vocational-technical schools. Fifteen courses are offered, and most are worth 30 hours credit. One of the series, food preparation, is a 60-hour course. The teachers are contracted and paid through the vocational/technical school system.

**Connecticut.** Through a joint project with the University of Connecticut, teams of instructors go to schools. One team teaches nutrition to the

teachers while another team teaches nutrition and food production to food service workers.

**Rhode Island.** Food service workers get classroom instruction in sanitation, nutrition education, and food preparation. If workers complete a certain number of courses, they are given a salary increase.

**Massachusetts.** A chef and dietitian go out to schools and train food service workers. Nutritionists also go out to schools and train school food service personnel.

**Oklahoma.** In Oklahoma City, a chef was hired to develop a merchandising videotape. At Broken Arrow, materials from the Heart Association are used for training food service personnel.

**New Mexico.** Albuquerque offers schools a food service certification training program that ties in with salary increases. Instruction sheets are sent to managers which give helpful hints and information on merchandising and food.

**Louisiana.** Caddo Parish has a training program for prospective managers. One supervisor is responsible for the training. There is also a test kitchen for standardizing recipes. Orleans Parish has a group of supervisors on the food service staff whose primary purpose is to train food service personnel. These supervisors also help schools that are having problems. They have published a book on salads, which includes merchandising tips.

**California.** In Alum Rock School District, each food service manager attends a training session on food preparation or sanitation at a central location. The manager then returns and trains his or her staff. This program is currently expanding to other local districts.

*article by Ralph E. Vincent  
photo by George Robinson*



## 214 New Hampshire's Kitchen-on-Wheels CP.

For the past 4 years, a mobile classroom-on-wheels has been traveling throughout New Hampshire, offering people in food service a chance to sharpen their cooking skills or receive management training.

To date, more than 1,250 food service people have been trained this way. The average class size is 14 students, and the attendance rate is usually 100 percent.

### A 55-foot trailer

The mobile classroom is a 55-foot-long trailer based at the University of New Hampshire. The vehicle was built by the University's Thompson School of Applied Science, and is owned by the New Hampshire Department of Education. It is equipped with everything that would be found in a school cafeteria. A video machine is also available with tapes on every phase of food preparation.

Hannelore Dawson has been the chief instructor and coordinator since the program began. According to Dawson, 80 percent of the schools in the state have taken advantage of the special service. However, since there is a lot of turnover in school food service personnel and new employees are usually inexperienced, the need for training continues.

Sally McKenna is one of the people Hannelore Dawson has trained. She had been working in the Portsmouth Junior High School for 6 months when she began taking classes in the van. She had had no formal training in food preparation and, before receiving instruction with Dawson, she gained all her experience while on the job. After several weeks of training in the van, McKenna said she had acquired knowledge that might have taken her years to get elsewhere.

Leona Hussey had been working in the Epping Junior High School cafeteria for 12 years when she took classes in the van. The classes were an opportunity to build on what she already knew, and every Monday she traveled 34 miles to get instruction. She didn't get paid for attending, and she was not required to take the

December 1981



HANNELORE DAWSON

course. Like her fellow students, she went because she wanted to learn.

### Focus is nutrition

Some people are intimidated by the thought of cooking for one or two dinner guests. Many food service specialists are faced with the task of preparing meals for thousands of children daily. The food must be something children will enjoy, and it must meet federal standards.

Dawson shows her students how to prepare and serve tasty meals based on sound nutritional principles. Her program also prepares employees for greater responsibilities. "Most people don't appreciate school food service," she says. "We try to build self-confidence and enthusiasm to help cafeteria employees do their job well."

Most of the training is hands-on, and the students learn by preparing meals they would normally prepare in a school kitchen. Dawson also shares her many years of experience with the class. She shows the class little tricks such as the correct way to use a slicer and food cutter to make vegetables attractive.

Sanitation and safety are also part of the training. However, nutrition is always the primary focus. During the nutrition segments, students learn such things as the nutrient value of dairy products and how to identify vegetables that are major sources of vitamins. Dawson prepared most of the teaching materials herself.

### Participation remains high

Is the mobile classroom an approach Dawson would recommend to others? Absolutely, she says: "People said it would be difficult to get school food service people to come to the training because they wouldn't get paid for it, but we've had excellent participation."

She feels the van would be a good training tool not only for school lunch personnel, but also for child care workers, hospital staffs and others.

For more information, write:  
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Food Service Department  
Durham, New Hampshire 03824

article and photo by Ray David



# Training for Child Care People

## Southeast states work together on film series

Many organizations that sponsor the Child Care Food Program—churches and local government agencies, for example—do not have staff with expertise to provide training in areas like food service. A recent survey in Florida showed that child care center directors there believe their greatest need is learning how to conduct training for their staffs.

To help child care staffs provide more and better training, three southeastern states have developed a series of training films. A joint effort by the Alabama, Florida and Kentucky Departments of Education, the series focuses on major problems and concerns of day care home providers and child care center personnel.

The films are short—15 minutes each—and most are general enough to avoid their becoming quickly outdated. The colorful scenes in them were filmed on location in child care centers and day care homes in Florida, the state that coordinated the project.

### Menu planning is one topic

There are 10 films in all. "Planning Your Menu," "Let's Go Shopping," and "Meal Preparation and Service"

are a few of the titles. Other films deal with topics like health and sanitation, involving parents, and nutrition education.

One of the more frequently requested films is "Planning Your Menu." Libby Grever of Community Coordinator Child Care, a Child Care Food Program sponsor in Louisville, Kentucky, says that's not surprising—menu planning is an area in which day care providers need a lot of assistance.

Ideally, the films are only a part of a larger training program. They serve primarily as motivators for more in-depth coverage of a topic. Accompanying the films are lesson plans that include outlines of content, transparencies and color slides, samples of activity sheets and handouts, suggested evaluation methods, and lists of resources.

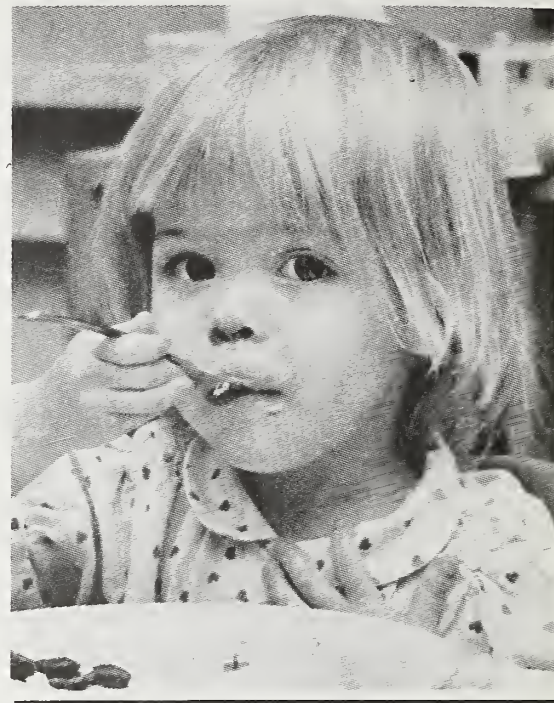
For example, the film about meal preparation and service is supplemented by three lesson plans. "Take the Guesswork Out of Cooking" deals with the importance and advantages of standardized recipes and how to use them correctly. "Work Smarter—Not Harder" is about work simplification, and "The 10 C's of Cooking Vegetables" teaches proper procedures for vegetable cookery. Each lesson lasts 20 to 30 minutes.

How effective are the films? According to Joan Ricks of the Florida Department of Education's Food and Nutrition Management Division, the films manage to gain and hold the attention of child care workers. They say, "This is about some of us. This is what we actually do." Because of the strong identification factor, they participate actively in the lessons and discussions that follow.

### Series is widely used

Ricks reports that the series is used widely in Florida. Child Care Food Program area consultants use the films to train sponsoring organizations, who in turn may borrow the films to conduct training for their day care centers and homes. Some sponsoring organizations have monthly training meetings for their facilities and show one film per month.

Like Florida, both Alabama and Kentucky loan the films to sponsoring organizations within their states. In



Alabama, the series is distributed through the state nutrition education and training library. The Southeast Regional Office of the Food and Nutrition Service also has sets of the films which it lends to organizations that sponsor the Child Care Food Program in Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee—the southeastern states where FNS administers the program directly.

States in other regions may borrow the films and lesson plans from the Food and Nutrition Information Center in Beltsville, Maryland.

Individual films are available in either 16 millimeter reel-to-reel films or in ¾-inch videotapes. The lesson plans, accompanied by transparencies and slides, are also available from FNIC.

For more information, write:  
Information Staff  
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA  
1100 Spring Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30367



## 24 Florida asks extension home economists to help [13]

In another training project in the Southeast, Florida's nutrition education and training coordinator Sheila Sheridan has enlisted the help of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Sheridan is a firm believer in interagency cooperation. "You are making a mistake if you don't work with other agencies," she says. "You can't do it all alone."

When she assumed her duties as state coordinator of the Nutrition Education and Training Program (NET), one of the tasks Sheridan faced was providing training to approximately 4,000 child care centers in Florida. With a staff of only two people and a limited budget, she would have been hard pressed to train even a fraction of the child care personnel in the state.

Involving the Extension Service has enabled Sheridan to get statewide coverage. An added bonus is that some of the extension agents have degrees in food and nutrition, and most have taken some courses in nutrition.

### Pilot test last year

The project got underway in June 1980 with a 4-month pilot test. The NET staff contracted the University of Florida to train 10 extension agents, who, in turn, began training child care personnel. The extension home economists received 2½ days of instruction on using a special training package developed for the project by the university.

Shirley Clark of Gadsen County was one of the home economists selected for the pilot test. At the request of child care centers in her area, she had begun offering nutrition classes for them in 1977. "I had trouble finding appropriate teaching materials," said Clark, "so I appealed to the State Extension Service office for help." That appeal led to her being chosen for the NET pilot project.

Clark sees a real advantage to having extension home economists con-



duct the local training. "The child care workers know me and accept me," she says. Because they feel comfortable with the trainer, they ask questions and participate actively. This increases their learning.

Another advantage, Sheila Sheridan believes, is that the extension home economists actually go to each center to conduct the training. They schedule their visits to the centers during the children's nap times. Senior citizens or youth volunteers watch the children while the staff members are trained in another room or area of the center.

One of the biggest barriers to child care center personnel attending any type of training has been finding someone to stay with the children for long periods of time while the child care workers travel to and attend training at another site. Seldom have all of a center's staff been able to attend at one time.

### Some tips for others

Both women offer a number of tips for others conducting training for child care center personnel. Clark says, "The more you can get them to participate, the better they like it." She has found that lectures on concepts are not interesting to the average worker and that concepts are difficult to communicate to them.

Involvement—cooking, playing games, participating in discussions—is the key to learning. She adds that

the workers seem to appreciate the certificate and continuing education units they receive at the end of the training course.

Sheridan points out that child care center personnel are from diverse education backgrounds. As a result, training should be basic enough to be understood by the person with the least education. She admits, however, that this approach leaves some child care workers wanting more information. To accommodate these workers, Florida has created a self-instructional course, "Nutrition Awareness," which is a continuation of the basic course taught by the home economists.

The pilot test was so successful that this year 121 more extension home economists and child care professionals are being trained. Sheridan sees the project as the beginning of an educational process that will continue. "If you teach people to be trainers in their own communities and then step out, those people will pick up the program if it is good."

Joan Canal, project coordinator for the Florida training effort, has this advice for agencies interested in working with the Cooperative Extension Service:

First, plan to train the extension home economists in the spring. The home economists will then be prepared to carry out the project as part of their work plans for the next fiscal year.

Also, solicit grass-roots involvement from the beginning. The county home economists know what will work best for particular audiences and can provide advice on the development of training materials.

Finally, be aware of the many areas extension agents must cover in their work. The Florida training package is designed so that the home economists have to do very little prior research and preparation to conduct a lesson—30 minutes at most.

For more information, write:  
Sheila Sheridan  
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Knott Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

articles by Brenda Schuler  
photos by Fred Witte



## A Maryland nutritionist works with Head Start centers

Marie Lapari, nutritionist at the University of Maryland, is teaching child care workers new ways to bring fresh ideas to food preparation.

For the past 2 years, Lapari and her assistant, Peter Pizzolongo, have been traveling throughout Maryland, conducting 2-day workshops in all of the state's 100 Head Start centers. Pizzolongo is himself a Head Start teacher.

Lapari emphasizes "hands-on" learning and plans a variety of activities for child care center staffs. At noontime, she divides workshop participants into four groups to prepare lunch. At one center last spring, the day's lunch included a colorful salad made from lettuce, garbanzo beans, shredded carrots, chopped parsley, and frozen peas stir-fried in a little oil. As a main dish, one of the four groups made macaroni and cheese by mixing cottage cheese with boiled elbow macaroni and baking it for 15 minutes in a 350 degree oven.

In the handouts Lapari gave participants, she included a set of suggested menus. "I have planned these with several guidelines in mind, such as texture and color, and ethnic needs. I've tried to create variety with such things as whole wheat and pita bread, fried bananas, bamboo shoots, cabbage and fruits."

Lapari tells the food service workers they have a chance to teach good nutrition habits to the children, especially pre-schoolers. "You've got these kids at an early enough age to be introduced to a wide variety of foods. They haven't seen that much in the world yet, so a lot of things are new.

" 'My child will not eat spinach or anything,' parents will say. But the children love raw vegetables. You need to remember that children have more taste buds than we do. They prefer certain foods raw, like vegetables, because that way they don't taste as strong—spinach, for example."



MARIE LAPARI AND PETER PIZZOLONGO

During the 2-day workshops, Lapari and Pizzolongo cover a lot of ground. Among the topics are: planning meals and snacks for groups of children; using cooking experiences to help children learn; feeding children with special needs (children who are handicapped, overweight, underweight, or who have behavior problems); and serving family style meals.

Lapari is pleased with what the child care staffs have learned. "The starting point is for the teachers and cooks and other staff members to be

more aware of nutrition—and to be competent enough to do something about it. They now have some good basic information, and they can build on that."

For more information, write:  
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West Education Annex  
University of Maryland  
College Park, Maryland 20742

article by Ralph E. Vincent  
photo by Murray Lemmon



# Making the Most of School Lunch Dollars

On a hot August afternoon Monica Berry drove 40 miles over the hills of southern New Hampshire to a state office building in Concord, the capital city. Berry was worried about the school lunch program she directs at Rollingsford Elementary School near Somersworth. In the few weeks before school started she had to decide whether or not to raise the lunch price from 55 cents, working with increased food and labor costs and fewer federal dollars.

Two and a half hours later, after a session with Susan Horace of the New Hampshire Department of Education's food and nutrition service, Berry's anxiety had faded. She felt that it would be possible to manage her lunch program without charging more. She had learned a method of figuring costs per meal. She had looked over menu plans from other school lunch systems and believed she could make enough changes to keep costs in line.

Berry wanted to present a solid budget for the coming year to the school committee. She knew from experience that when prices go up, participation drops off, so maintaining price was important to planning.

## Ideas from task force

The process that enabled Berry to quickly get a handle on her meal costs and new management methods began in the spring of 1981 in the New

England Regional Office of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Sensing mounting uncertainty about the future of the National School Lunch Program, Marie Lubeley, regional director of nutrition and technical services, had called state school nutrition offices and with them formed a task force to help local school districts cope with the coming changes.

The task force met in May in a federal building in Worcester, Massachusetts, for an all-day session. Seven women from 5 states, all nutritionists or experienced food service directors, brainstormed and came up with 26 possible ways to improve management and cut costs. Suggestions ranged from fast food service, regional purchasing and better use of commodities, to making soup at school and having students bring sandwiches from home.

"It was important for us to look at all possibilities," Susan Horace recalled later. The group divided the 26 possibilities into 6 general areas and gave states responsibility for writing papers on specific food service systems.

"We knew the expertise was out there," Marie Lubeley said. "It was a question of bringing in the states and sharing the knowledge."

One of the papers was on a cold pack system used in Rhode Island. Food service supervisors Cathy Chandle and Ann Cornell described their operation, which has the capacity to produce 5,000 meals a day in one kitchen. Cold pack is a labor-efficient self-serve lunch, similar to a cold bag lunch, but packed and wrapped as a single unit on a tray with a clear, plastic wrap.

Other food service systems—traditional cafeteria service, fast food "combo" and a la carte, food items sold individually—were also subjects of papers. Each paper carefully analyzed cost elements like food, condiments, labor equipment, energy, utilities, and space.

"A school may run several systems at the same time but the food service director must know the cost of each," said Pat Herder, FNS coordinator for the task force.

For example, a la carte items do not receive federal reimbursement because they are not part of a meal



MARY RAGNO

pattern. Combos, on the other hand, are reimbursable if students select several items from the meal pattern. The key is merchandising choice within the patterns.

Massachusetts' successful Concord-Carlisle regional high school provides its 1300 students with variety. In addition to the standard hot meal, they may choose from: grilled cheese or ham and cheese sandwiches; hot dogs; hamburgers; pizza; custom sandwiches on a roll, whole wheat or Syrian bread; soup; salads (tossed, tuna, chicken or chef's) and a selection of fresh fruit. The students are in and out of the food service area within 2 minutes, an economy feature for the school.

"In some situations, 'fast food' is a good option, particularly when there is off-campus competition, but because it is equipment intensive, it is more costly and requires volume sales," says Kim Entsminger, an FNS nutritionist.

Schools with traditional cafeteria service can sometimes find unexpected ways to improve efficiency. Task force member Mary Ragno, an education service specialist with Connecticut's child nutrition program, went back to the elementary school in her own community, Pomfret, and advised the staff on ways to make the cafeteria financially self-sustaining. The school has since increased participation with a new 9-day menu cycle based on children's preferences,





and it has cut costs by reducing the labor force. The food service now has a balanced budget.

The school staff made other helpful adjustments along the way. For example, they eliminated pre-wrapped chocolate cookies and other purchased desserts, and through better time management, made it possible to bake oatmeal and peanut butter cookies using USDA commodities.

#### **Sharing the information**

By the end of June, much of the material the task force had prepared was in draft form. In addition to the background papers, the task force developed supplemental fact sheets on labor, cost effectiveness, food management companies, student

help, disposable and permanent dishes and flatware, satellite units, and expansion of facilities.

Susan Horace decided to share the material with local school districts immediately. She sent a letter stating that she and her colleague, Pat Killam, would be available for consultation from 1 to 3:30 p.m. every Wednesday in Concord. It was for one of these meetings that Monica Berry traveled to Concord in August.

Horace is pleased with her new role offering technical assistance. "We changed from monitors to helpers," she explained. "Local people said, 'Concord really cares.'"

One area she feels is especially important for schools is costing—figuring out costs per meal and planning accordingly. Horace had gotten a

lot of experience in costing as a food service director at St. Mary's Hospital in Troy, New York. "We could buy at local markets and had a lot of freedom," she said, "but the weekly cost per meal was crucial."

Working with school food service directors during the summer, Horace used a number of tools to teach food costing. One of the most effective, she felt, was a 15-day modified pattern menu developed by Doris Jenks of Swanzey, New Hampshire. Jenks drew up and costed menus based on the USDA reimbursable meal pattern. She also analyzed each day's menu to see what could be taken away to save money while still meeting meal pattern requirements.

One day, for example, Jenks planned pizza with meat as a main



dish and costed it at 26 cents per serving. After looking it over, she saw that she could use cheese alone as a meat alternate and brought the serving cost down to 18 cents. The entire meal—including vegetable, fruit, bread, meat alternate and milk—went from a cost of 63 cents to 55 cents.

By substituting a USDA-commodity chicken patty for chicken pieces and eliminating a cookie, Jenks cut food costs on another meal from 64 cents to 55 cents. Most of the savings came from reducing the cost of the main (meat or meat alternate) dish and eliminating dessert.

Horace's point in sharing the Jenk's paper with school food service directors was not the item-by-item savings, but the importance of knowing costs in order to effect savings. At her Wednesday afternoon sessions, she also shared the latest information on available commodities. Menus including free USDA-donated food clearly cost less, but knowing what will be available and using it effectively requires planning.

Task force members all feel that labor is a variable that should be looked at carefully. Monica Berry uses student help to carry trays to and from the classrooms where food is served. Her labor costs are very different from those in unionized Rhode Island. Berry's salary is paid by the school committee; other directors are salaried from food service budgets.

#### **A resource for schools**

"There are any number of options for schools, and it is important for them not to rule any out," said Horace at the end of the summer. She feels the task force kit is a resource for new ways of looking at school lunch.

The task force is distributing the package to schools throughout New England. States and schools in other regions may obtain copies of the kit, entitled "Making the Most of School Lunch Dollars," by writing to: Marie Lubeley  
Nutrition and Technical Services  
New England Regional Office,  
FNS, USDA  
33 North Avenue  
Burlington, Massachusetts 01803

*article by Catherine Tim Jensen  
photos by George Robinson*

December 1981



## **Putting Nutrition and Business Together**

Thelsa Turner runs the food service program at the Michigan School for the Blind (MSB) in Lansing like she would run any business, because, she says, that's just what it is—a business. There's no room for waste in her kitchen.

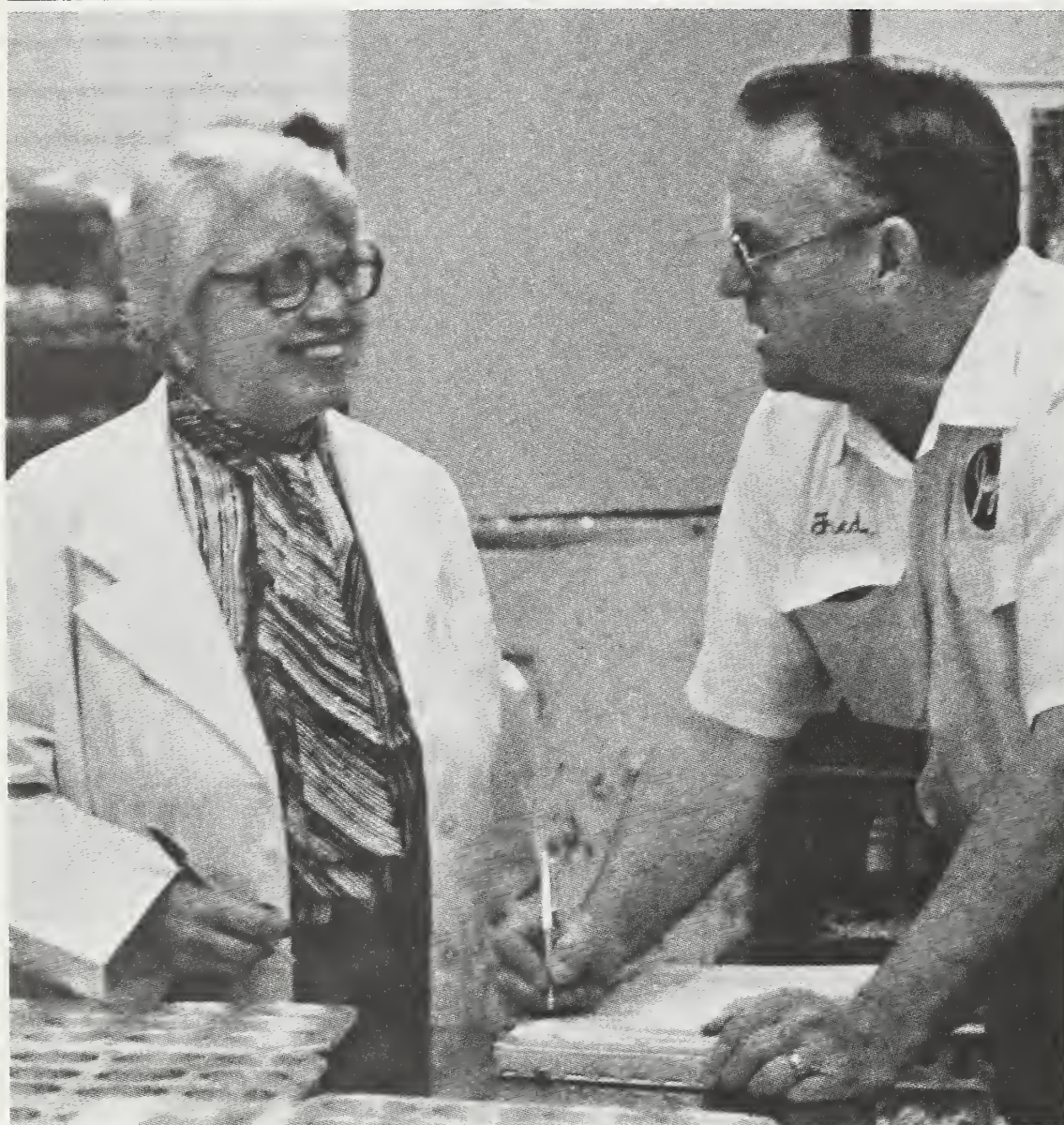
Since joining the staff of MSB in 1977, Turner has reduced operating costs of the food service by almost 50 percent. "When I came, I saw a lot of room for improvement here," Turner said. "The first year I stopped to analyze what needed to be done . . . I've taken a lot of management courses and I'm goal oriented."

Her list of accomplishments to date is impressive. She's achieved a substantial reduction in food waste—largely by instituting portion control and production records. She's redesigned the kitchen and added new energy-efficient equipment to cut utility bills. And, through better management, she's reduced her staff from 14 to 6 employees.

#### **Knows nutrition and business**

Turner is a nutritionist with a background in business. "I couldn't do the job at MSB without my background in nutrition," she said, "but it's my business background that has made the operation efficient." For 11 years, Turner worked as food service supervisor for an extended care facility. She received an associate degree in business in 1968.





**THELSA TURNER**

At MSB, the food service has special significance for students. Students have multiple handicaps, and all but 19 of the 115 live on campus in residential cottages. They range in age from 5 to 26. "Because most of the students live here, recreating the home environment is very important," Turner explained.

Mealtime is important for the blind students for other reasons as well. It is an opportunity for house parents to teach students proper table manners, the importance of good nutrition, how to help themselves, and clean up.

Meals are prepared in a central kitchen and transported to the cottages in a van. The house parent in each cottage calls the central kitchen in the morning to report the number of children who need meals that day. The house parents also keep charts of the number of breakfasts, lunches and dinners actually served each day.

Until this year, all meals were served home style. Due to budget constraints, however, Turner apprehensively turned to the use of thermotrays for the breakfast and lunch meals. The evening meal is still served family style and Turner, aware of the importance of maintaining the non-institutional atmosphere, wants to keep it that way.

Better portion control is one of the advantages of switching to thermotrays for breakfast and lunch. "When I came, I saw a lot of waste here," Turner said, explaining that there was a lot of extra food prepared and sent to the cottages. "Now we just prepare what is needed, and that's it. We went from serving gallons of milk to individual cartons of milk and I saved \$200 the first month alone.

"I ordered a lot of equipment for portion control. I don't like to see a cup of anything left over," she added.

## **Records help in planning**

Turner keeps careful production records. They not only enable her to keep a handle on waste, they also help with planning. "Records enable you to base your future orders on what you actually did the year before," she said. "It makes for better planning. I keep each year's records in a separate notebook and can go back and pull them out when needed."

The Michigan School for the Blind participates in USDA's National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The school also has a summer camp that participates in the Summer Food Service Program. Approximately 60 percent of the students at the school and 47 percent of the youths attending the camp are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

When Turner came to MSB, the school was not participating in USDA's school nutrition programs and was missing out on commodity foods as well as USDA reimbursements for meals. Turner learned about USDA's programs through her contacts in the Hospital Food Service Society, and she quickly initiated the programs.

In fact, Turner said, she plans her meals around USDA commodities. "I depend on the commodities and definitely consider them when I make up my budget. I order my limit every time, and whatever commodities I get, I use." The school gets deliveries of commodities once a month.

## **Plans menus 60 days ahead**

Turner plans her menus 60 days in advance, according to the commodities available, and then makes adjustments as needed. She doesn't use cycle menus even though "they're easy because you just repeat the same menu over and over again." She likes to have the flexibility of making substitutions when the commodities come in or when low-cost items are available commercially.

To anticipate which USDA foods she should order, Turner follows the commodity market to see what foods will be available. "When I knew the price of pork was going to be low, I ordered a lot of pork," she says. "I used it on pizza, and in meat mixtures and

Food and Nutrition





meat loaves." She also follows regular market prices for those foods she needs to purchase. "When something is high," she said, "I don't use it—that's why I don't like cycle menus."

Sometimes Turner plans entire meals of commodities. She recently served a lunch of macaroni and cheese, peas, whole wheat muffins, fruit cocktail, and milk. The entire meal, except fruit cocktail, consisted of USDA commodities.

#### **Uses commodities at camp, too**

In planning summer meals for the camp, Turner also uses all of the commodities that are available to her—especially the ground beef. "What's a cookout without hamburgers?" she asks.

According to John Bullock, director of Camp Tuhsmeheeta, (TU-SME-HE-TA), Turner's expertise has allowed the camp to expand its services and facilities. The camp, which initially served 50 visually-impaired youths in 1975, now serves larger groups of children from around the state of Michigan.

"Feeding the children in a camp setting was a hurdle that had to be dealt with before the camp program could be extended, and Mrs. Turner had the resources to deal with this problem," Bullock said.

One of the changes the food service director made was in equipment. "When the camp was purchased," she

said, "the kitchen was small with outdated equipment. A new facility and equipment were needed. Also, since handicapped people have problems using disposable eating utensils, it was necessary to purchase a dishwasher for sanitation reasons."

Each summer the camp has an event called "Adventure," which presents a special menu planning challenge. Children who participate eat, sleep and live outdoors for 10 days. "I rely on dehydrated foods in planning these menus—things such as dehydrated eggs and bacon, cocoa, milk, juice, and pancakes and syrup," said Turner. Learning how to prepare these foods is another part of the children's rehabilitation program.

#### **Feels training is important**

Whether she's working on the summer program or the regular school food service, Turner sees training as crucial. Each year she provides a week of in-service training for her entire staff right before school re-opens in the fall. She includes not only food service workers, but house parents, teachers, janitors—any one who plays a role in making the meal service work.

During the year, she has in-service training whenever she brings in new equipment or initiates a change. For example, when she switched to thermotrays for breakfast and lunch, she took her staff to a rehabilitation center that uses the trays.

"You have fewer problems when people are informed and know why they're doing things," said Turner. "You also have less turnover because employees are happier if they are well informed and feel they're part of the program."

Thelsa Turner set a 5-year goal for herself when she joined MSB as food service supervisor. "After the first 3 years I was right on the button, and I have more plans for the next 2 years. We'll just have to wait and see."

For more information, write:  
Thelsa Turner  
Domestic Service Supervisor  
Michigan School for the Blind  
715 West Willow  
Lansing, Michigan 48913

*article and photos  
by Mary Beth Miller*



The Food and Nutrition Service gets many requests for recipes for small families. Many of the requests are from elderly food stamp participants or low-income mothers looking for advice on well-balanced, economical meals.

On the next six pages are several low-cost and easy-to-prepare recipes, along with suggestions on how to shop and cook for one or two people.

If you work with low-income families, you may want to xerox the recipes and use them with other nutrition education materials. To reach more people, give a copy to your local newspaper and ask the editor to run the recipes on the paper's food page. We've printed the recipes in large type to make them easy for elderly people to read. Your local newspaper may want to do that, too.

Elderly people sometimes need special encouragement to eat. If you know or counsel elderly people who have lost their interest in eating, try suggesting they call and talk to a friend during meals or that they visit a local senior citizen's center for lunch or dinner. Also, shopping for and preparing food can be more fun if they ask a friend to join them.





# COOKING FOR

# 1 OR 2

✓ Planning and preparing meals for one or two can sometimes be harder than planning and preparing meals for five or six. Here are some tips that can save you time and money. . .and some recipes that are low-cost and easy to prepare.

🍴 **Prepare several meals at once. . .**

Instead of making one or two servings for tonight's dinner, make three or four. Then label, date and freeze the rest for another day.

🍴 **When you're shopping, select food carefully. . .**

When you're buying fresh fruit, buy small quantities. Don't be shy about breaking packages or bunches. Buy a few pieces of ripe fruit to eat right away, and a few that aren't so ripe to eat later in the week.

Buy canned and packaged foods in sizes you will use. Vegetables in large cans are not cost-saving if they spoil in the refrigerator before you eat them.

🍴 **Look for ways to economize. . .**

Compare prices of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits. Watch for fresh vegetables and fruits in season.

Frozen vegetables in large economy-size bags can be handy for one or two. You can take out a serving or two and store the rest in the freezer.

Buying large sizes of storable staples such as flour, rice, and salad oil can also save you money.

Also, learn to compare value by looking at unit prices on food products. The unit price will give you the price per serving, ounce, pound or other common unit.



## Cornbread

Best hot from the oven!

1 cup flour  
1 cup corn meal  
2 tablespoons sugar  
4 teaspoons baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 egg  
1 cup skim milk  
2 tablespoons oil

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Combine flour, corn meal, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
3. Stir well.
4. Beat egg in another bowl. Add skim milk and oil. Stir well.
5. Add liquid mixture to flour mixture. Stir until just blended; batter should be a little lumpy.

6. Pour into greased and floured 8-inch square pan.
7. Bake 20-30 minutes until golden brown and done.

*Makes 16, 2-inch square pieces.*



## Quick Cinnamon Raisin Bread

Smells as good as it tastes.

1 cup whole wheat flour  
1 cup white flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 egg  
1 cup skim milk, made from nonfat dry milk  
1/3 cup oil  
1/2 cup raisins

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Combine flours, sugar, salt, baking powder, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Stir well.
3. In a separate bowl, beat egg. Add skim milk and oil. Stir well.

4. Add liquid mixture to flour mixture. Stir until just blended. Batter should be a little lumpy.
5. Stir in raisins.
6. Pour into greased and floured loaf pan.
7. Bake 35-40 minutes, until done.



# Recipes

## Baked Mini Meat Loaves

A handy sandwich filling.

3/4 pound lean ground beef, or 1/4 pound  
lean ground pork and 1/2 pound  
lean ground beef  
3/4 cup uncooked oatmeal

1/4 onion, grated  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon pepper

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Form into four loaves about 2 inches high.
3. Place in a large ungreased baking pan. Bake at 375° F until brown and cooked through, about 25 to 30 minutes.

4. Pour fat from pan before serving.  
*Makes four servings, or eight sandwiches.*  
*Freeze or refrigerator leftovers.*

## Lentil Soup

This thick soup is flavorful!

1/2 cup dry lentils  
1/2 small finely chopped onion  
1 large stalk finely chopped celery with  
leaves

1 small thinly sliced carrot  
2 cups water  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Pinch pepper

1. Wash and drain lentils.
  2. Put all ingredients in a pan. Heat to boiling. Cover and boil gently about 30 minutes until lentils are tender.
- Makes two servings about 1 cup each.*

*Variations: Add the juice of 1/2 lemon and 2 cups fresh spinach leaves to the lentil soup during last 5 minutes of cooking. Substitute dry split peas for the lentils.*

## Pineapple Baked Apple

A tangy treat at the end of your meal!

2 large apples  
1 cup water

4 ounces of juice-packed crushed  
pineapple

1. Core apples without cutting through bottom.
2. Place apples in a small baking dish. Fill center with drained, crushed pineapple. Pour a small amount of around the apples. Do not pour water over the apples.

3. Bake covered at 375° F for about 60 minutes or until apples are tender.  
*Variations: Raisins, cinnamon or nutmeg may be added to the pineapple.*



## Cottage Cheese Pancakes

A delicious way to start the day.

2 eggs  
1 cup lowfat cottage cheese  
2 teaspoons oil

6 tablespoons whole wheat flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Unsweetened applesauce

1. Beat eggs in a bowl.
2. Strain cottage cheese into bowl with eggs.
3. Add oil, flour and salt. Mix well.
4. Spoon batter into lightly oiled frying pan. Flatten slightly with back of spoon.

5. Fry both sides over low heat, until slightly browned.
6. Serve hot with unsweetened applesauce.

*Makes eight 3-inch pancakes, four per serving.*

## Potato Salad

A low-fat variation of an old favorite!

2 small potatoes  
1/4 small finely chopped onion  
1 tablespoon vinegar

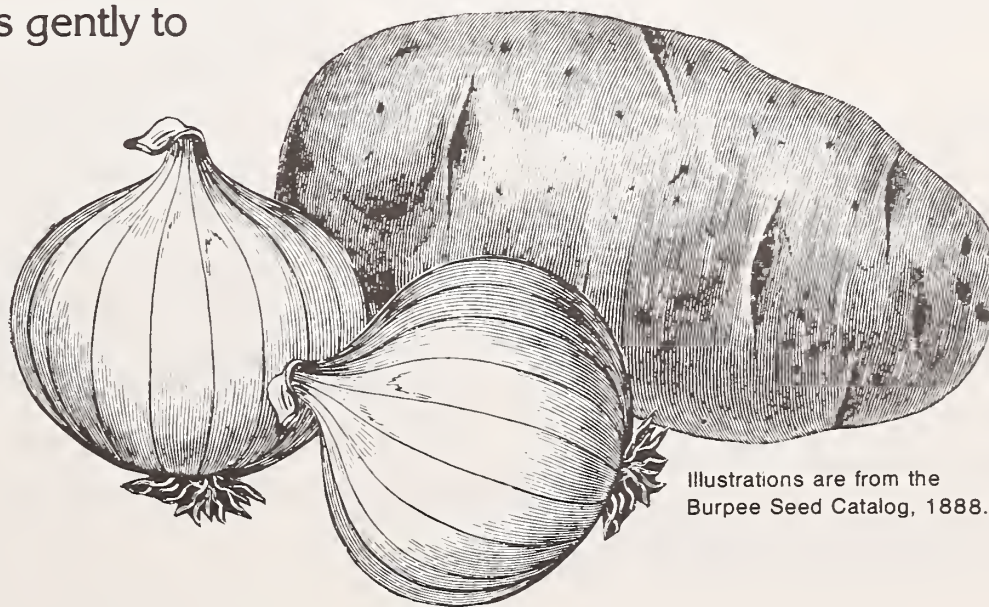
1 1/2 teaspoons oil  
1/2 teaspoon mustard  
Pinch salt and pepper

1. Boil potatoes gently in water just until done. They should be slightly firm. Cool slightly. Peel and slice.
2. In a small bowl, combine onion, vinegar, oil, mustard, salt and pepper. Mix well.
3. Add potato slices and toss gently to coat potatoes.

4. Serve hot or chill for 1 to 2 hours and serve cold.

*Makes two servings, 3/4 cup each.*

*Variations: A little dill weed (fresh or dried) or other herbs may be added.*



Illustrations are from the  
Burpee Seed Catalog, 1888.



# Recipes

## Baked Chicken Tastes good hot or cold!

1/4 chicken cut into 2 pieces  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Pinch pepper  
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder

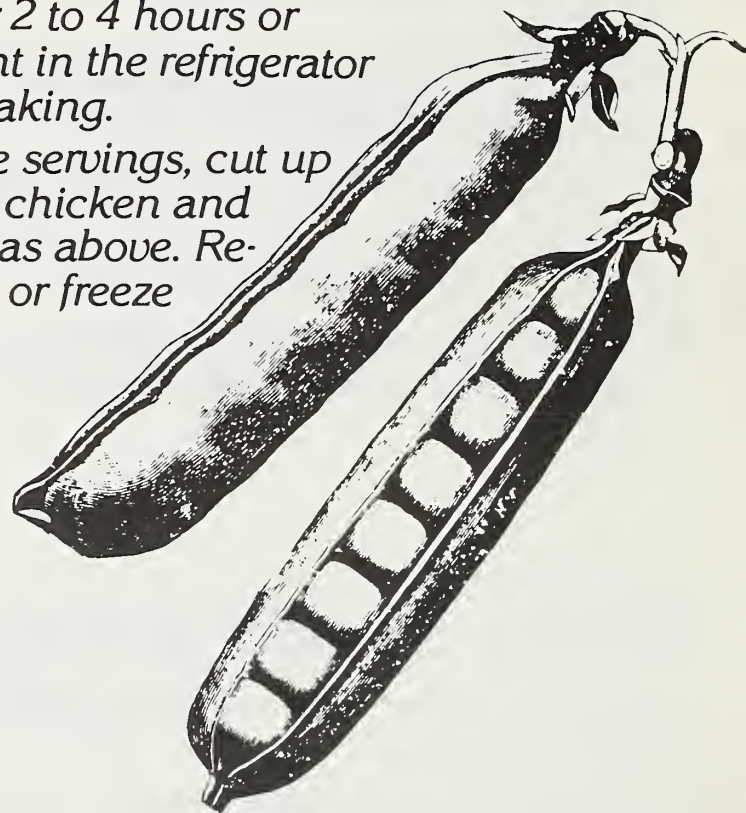
1. Place chicken in a baking pan.
2. Rub salt, pepper, and garlic on both sides of chicken pieces.
3. Bake uncovered at 350° F for 1 hour.

Makes two servings.

*Variations: Other herbs or spices like oregano, ginger, or thyme may be sprinkled on the chicken. The chicken can be marinated in lemon*

*juice for 2 to 4 hours or overnight in the refrigerator before baking.*

*For more servings, cut up a whole chicken and prepare as above. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers.*



## Pork-Egg Fried Rice Try other meats for a change in this one-pot meal.

2 cups cooked rice  
1/4 pound pork  
1/2 chopped green pepper  
1 small onion, chopped  
1 teaspoon oil

1/2 cup frozen peas  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder  
Pinch pepper  
1 egg

1. Cut pork into thin strips, 1-inch long.
2. Saute onion in 1 teaspoon oil for 5 minutes. Add green pepper and cook until soft. Remove from pan.
3. Brown pork in pan.
4. Add soy sauce, garlic powder, and pepper to pork. Simmer 8 to 10 minutes until pork is cooked through. Add water, if necessary.
5. Add onions, green pepper and frozen peas. Simmer 2 more minutes.

6. Add cooked rice, stir well and heat through. Remove from pan.
7. Beat egg and fry in pan with 1/2 teaspoon oil. Cut in long strips, 1/4-inch wide. Put pork-fried rice in serving dish or on plates and garnish with egg strips.

*Makes two servings, about 1-3/4 cups each.*



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# *Menu Ideas*

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## Breakfast

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Cottage cheese pancakes\*  
with unsweetened  
applesauce  
Skim milk

Citrus fruit juice  
Quick cinnamon  
raisin bread\*  
Skim milk

## Lunch

---

Vegetable juice  
Grilled cheese and  
tomato sandwich  
Potato salad\*  
Fresh fruit  
Skim milk

Lentil soup\*  
Orange-grapefruit salad  
Bread  
Skim milk

## Dinner

---

Baked chicken\*  
Noodles  
Cooked peas  
Cornbread\*  
Fresh or canned peaches  
in light syrup  
or natural juices  
Beverage

Pork-egg fried rice\*  
Whole wheat bread  
Pineapple baked apple\*  
Beverage

## SNACKS

---

1/2 meat loaf sandwich\*  
Unsweetened fruit juice  
Bean dip with vegetable sticks

\*Recipes included



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